



DIOCESE OF EVANSVILLE  
SAFE ENVIRONMENT

**BEST PRACTICES FOR PASTORAL CONDUCT**

*Best Practices for Pastoral Conduct  
For Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Candidates for Ordination,  
Pastoral Ministers, Administrators, Staff, and Volunteers*

As children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us, the Diocese of Evansville is committed to safeguarding minors, which are persons under eighteen (18) years of age.

**As a condition of their providing services to the minors of our diocese, bishops, priests, deacons, candidates for ordination, pastoral ministers, administrators, staff, and volunteers that work with minors in any capacity shall:**

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect of a minor to the Department of Child Services (Indiana DCS Hotline: 1-800-800-5556) or to a local law enforcement agency; then inform the appropriate supervisor.
- Immediately report the suspected sexual abuse of a minor by diocesan personnel to the Department of Child Services or to a local law enforcement agency.
  - If a bishop has (a) performed sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person; (b) forced someone to perform or to submit to sexual acts through violence, threat, or abuse of authority; (c) produced, exhibited, possessed, or distributed child pornography, including by electronic means, or recruited or induced a minor or vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions; or (d) executed actions or omissions intended to interfere with or avoid a civil or Church (canonical) investigation into allegations of sexual abuse committed by a cleric or religious: after reporting to DCS or to a local law enforcement agency, inform the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting service ([www.reportbishopabuse.org](http://www.reportbishopabuse.org) or 1-800-276-1562), which is a third-party reporting service for gathering and relaying such reports to the appropriate Church authorities.
  - If the sexual abuse of a minor involves a priest, deacon, candidate for ordination, pastoral minister, administrator, staff person, or volunteer: after reporting to DCS or to a local law enforcement agency, inform the diocesan victim assistance coordinator (toll-free: 866-200-3004; local: 812-490-9565).
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of minors.
- Participate fully in the required training sessions for adults working with minors.
- Be subject to a thorough criminal history background check.



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- Refrain from smoking or using tobacco, or smoking electronic cigarettes or similar devices (“vaping”), at any time while serving minors in parish, school, or diocesan sponsored functions.
- Refrain from using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while serving minors in parish, school, or diocesan functions.
- Be informed that the diocese’s policies and procedures regarding allegations of sexual abuse of minors is on the diocesan website ([www.evdio.org](http://www.evdio.org)).

The sexual abuse of a minor also includes:

- A vulnerable person is any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offense.
- Child pornography, which is any representation of a minor, regardless of the means used, involved in explicit sexual activities, whether real or simulated, and any representation of sexual organs of minors for primarily sexual purposes.

***Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Child Services or to a local law enforcement agency is a Class B Misdemeanor. The only exception to this requirement involves information learned within the Sacrament of Reconciliation.***

Any action inconsistent with Safe Environment Program policies and procedures may result in the termination of a person’s giving services to minors.

Amended May 2020

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